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## **State Archives Works to Protect Essential Records**

The *Louisiana State Archives* has been awarded a Certificate of Preparedness by the Council of State Archivists in recognition of its efforts to protect irreplaceable records—both those in its custody and those held by other repositories statewide—from natural disasters and other threats.

It's just a matter of time before an unexpected natural disaster or catastrophe strikes a state, region, or community. The Louisiana State Archives joins state archives nationwide in working to ensure that records most important to our citizens, communities, and states will survive such an event.

The national effort is being led by the Council of State Archivists (CoSA), an organization comprising directors of the archival agency in every state and territory. Florent Hardy, Jr., PhD represents Louisiana in CoSA.

CoSA launched its Emergency Preparedness Initiative immediately following the 2005 hurricanes that devastated the Gulf coast. With the help of the Louisiana State Archives and comparable agencies in all 50 states, CoSA has completed several milestones in its efforts to help state and local governments as well as organizations holding historical records of all kinds better prepare for natural disasters and emergencies. "The response of the state archives to this initiative was unprecedented," says David Carmicheal, director of the state archives in Georgia and president of CoSA when the initiative was launched. "This was the first records-related emergency planning effort completed by all 50 states, and it sets the standard for all future efforts."

The CoSA Certificate of Preparedness recognizes the Louisiana State Archives for completing a detailed assessment of records-related preparedness in Louisiana and compiling a basic emergency communication and response plan for state archives staff.

The assessment was designed to provide a baseline against which each state archives and records management program could measure its progress in improving emergency preparedness. Since its completion Secretary of State Jay Dardenne and the staff of the Louisiana State Archives have shared the Emergency Action Plan and the PReP with the divisions within the Secretary of State's Office as well as with the Directors of the Secretary of State administered museums throughout the state. Additionally, the Louisiana State Historical Records Board members were provided access to these documents.

The Council of State Archivists used the data gathered during the assessments to compile, *Safeguarding a Nation's Identity*, a report that highlights major findings and action steps necessary to prepare for future disasters and records-related emergencies. The report also underscores the important role records play every day in the lives of American citizens, protecting their lives, property, and rights, and ensuring that order and normal operations can be restored following a disaster.

September is National Preparedness Month in the United States. CoSA and the Louisiana State Archives will be joining a nationwide effort along with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other agencies to educate the public about preparing for emergencies of all kinds.

More information about CoSA's nationwide Emergency Preparedness Initiative can be found on the CoSA website at: [www.statearchivists.org/prepare](http://www.statearchivists.org/prepare).

To learn more about the Louisiana State Archives, visit [www.sos.louisiana.gov](http://www.sos.louisiana.gov)

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